Myanmar and Nepal too are ahead of India in their effort of eradicating the dreaded disease;

(d) if so, whether India has targeted Eradication of leprosy by 2005; and

(e) whether the main problems being faced by Government are surfacing of hidden cases particularly in two States Chattisgarh and Jharkhand?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) and (b) Who has informed that the Prevalence Rate (PR) for leprosy in India is 3.7 per 10,000 population whereas the PRs for the neighbouring countries are as under:

(i)	Bangladesh	— 0.67
(ii)	Bhutan	— 0.77
(iii)	Maldives	— 0.79
(iv)	Sri Lanka	— 0.61

(c) Other South East Asian countries namely Indonesia, Thailand have PRS of less than 1/ 10,000 population while Nepal and Myanmar are still endemic with PRs of 3.40 and 2.37 per 10,000 population respectively. However, these countries are much smaller both in size and population as compared to India.

(d) India has targeted for elimination of leprosy by end of March, 2004.

(e) Detection of hidden cases is one of the main problems in these States as well as in the States of Bihar, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. To overcome this, active search under leprosy Elimination Campaign is carried out in these States.

Promotion of Homeopathic herbal medicines

4820. PROF. M.M. AGARWAL: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are formulating a comprehensive programme to promote Homoeopathic herbal medicines in the country;

(b) if so, the details of herbal medicines found in our country;

(c) the efforts made, so far in this regard; and

(d) funds earmarked for this purpose?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) to (d) The Central Council for Research in Homoeopathy, an autonomous organization under this department is engaged in research in Homoeopathy. National Institute of Homoeopathy at Calcutta is also engaged in Post-Graduate teaching and research. Extra-Mural research projects are also being financed for research in Homoeopathy. A Medicinal Plants Board has been set up to augment availability of authentic medicinal plants for manufacture of drugs. No specific allocation of funds has been made for this activity alone. There are about 800 medicines of Homoeopathy in use in India.

Report of fresh cases of plague

4821. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that three fresh cases with symptoms similar to those plague have again been reported from Chandigarh;

(b) whether it is also a fact that a team of experts from the Centre was deputed to investigate these cases;

(c) if so, what are their findings; and

(d) the corrective measures adopted to bring the situation under control?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) Subsequent to the plague outbreak in Himachal Pradesh in the first week of February, 2002 three suspected cases with plague like symptoms were reported from Chandigarh and its adjoining areas. After 14th March, 2002 no fresh case has been reported.

(b) to (d) Yes, Sir. On receiving report on these cases with plague like symptoms from Chandigarh, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare deputed a team of experts consisting of an epidemiologist and a microbiologist from National Institute of Communicable Diseases on 22nd February for conducting investigations. The NICD further strengthened its team at Chandigarh by sending 4 more experts to monitor the infection control measures in the areas of high risk.

Laboratory investigations of the clinical samples from these patients did not show suspicious bacterial growth. However, as a measure of abundant